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SIGNIFICANT CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING THE DISPOSITION OF THE ITALIAN AFRICAN COLONIES

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SIGNIFICANT CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING THE
DISPOSITION OF THE ITALIAN AFRICAN COLONIES

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The conflict of interests in Libya, Eritrea, and Italian Somaliland makes the ultimate disposition of those colonies one of the most complex of the problems on which agreement is being sought by the USSR, the UK, the US, and France. The possible repercussions of this conflict will be of long-range importance.

Each of the Big Four has broad political and economic objectives in Mediterranean Africa and the Near East. The capabilities of the Big Four for attaining their respective objectives depend importantly on what ultimate disposition is made of the Italian African colonies. Important as is this aspect of the matter, the Italian colonial issue is also part of a more important issue: the future political orientation of the Italian State. (An attending dependent issue, which will also affect the tactics of concerned states in striving for preferred positions in the Italian colonies, is the outcome of Big Four efforts to implement the Italian Treaty provisions for the administration of Trieste.)

The relative urgency of the over-all Italian issue relegates the specific issue of the disposition of the Italian colonies to subsidiary status, not because the latter is unimportant, but because the sequence of future developments in Italy will in part govern the stand taken by the Big Four Powers in their efforts to dispose of the colonies. Because the nature of future developments in Italy is presently obscure, Big Four tactics designed to further respective broad objectives by capitalizing on the Italian colonial issue are still in part unformulated. Therefore, while it is possible to consider significant aspects attending the disposition of the Italian African colonies, their interdependence with developments in Italy must constantly be kept in mind.

The immediate significance of the Italian African colonies to the security of the US lies in the fact that their disposition has important implications affecting the present critical relations between the Soviet Union and the Western Powers. From a long-range point of view, however, the colonies are important to US security because of their proximity to the strategic Near East, North Africa, and the Mediterranean areas, where the accomplishment of US objectives requires administrations which are stable and favorably disposed toward the US.

Politically, the attainment of these conditions depends on the establishment or continuance in power of politics in the Near East which will support the Western Powers now represented in this area, while providing for the orderly recognition of the legitimate aspirations of native elements.

A corollary of this is the exclusion from the Near East and contiguous territory of any power which desires instability or seeks to alienate elements presently neutral or favorably disposed to the Western Powers. The only major power with present intentions to exploit potential threats to the security of the Western Powers is the USSR; and Soviet capabilities for creating instability in the Middle East depend to a considerable extent on the opportunities arising from the disposition of the Italian African colonies.

The security of the US can be threatened by the adverse reaction of states or groups who feel that their legitimate interests have not been properly safeguarded in any agreement to dispose of the colonies. Arab resentment of British and French efforts to perpetuate a policy of imperialism (aggravated by the US stand on the Palestine problem) nurtures a situation with inherently explosive characteristics, which could result in local uprisings against the Western Powers. The Arab League could be expected to give tacit support to such local uprisings, and non-self-governing territories, particularly those predominantly Moslem, could be expected to respond to Arab leadership by intensifying already existing efforts by local nationalist movements to throw off foreign rule.

A disposition of the colonies which would reinforce the British and French positions would also (1) weaken the United Nations to the extent that, subsequent to the peace settlement, the colonies were not brought under the International Trusteeship System as clearly contemplated by the UN Charter, and (2) be construed, by non-colonial powers and non-self-governing groups, as a breach of international commitments regarding the welfare of native populations. On the other hand, an agreement providing for immediate or near-future independence for the colonies would jeopardize US objectives by further weakening the position of the UK and France. Moreover, a disposition of the colonies in which Italy would have no participation would weaken the present anti-Communist Italian Government at a time when the US seeks to strengthen it by political and economic assistance.

Economically, the Italian African colonies per se have no significance with respect to US security. Indirectly, by providing a minor outlet for Italian emigrants and a limited opportunity for foreign trade, Libya could be used as an instrument to advance US economic objectives in Italy.

Militarily, the Italian African colonies are of importance to US security by reason of their location, but a condition of the use of the colonies for military purposes is the protection of lines of communication to these areas from a military power capable of aggressive warfare. Occupying a central position in North Africa, Libya has an extensive, irregular coastline on the Mediterranean (with one major and two minor ports), and vast desert stretches which separate Egypt from Northwest Africa and make Libya difficult of access from the south. The establishment of land, sea, and air bases in Libya by a power capable of aggressive warfare would either constitute a threat to French interests in Algeria and Tunisia, to British interests in the Mediterranean, to Italy, to Egypt and the Suez Canal, to Greece, and to

Turkey, or would place the occupying power in a position to afford some degree of protection to these same areas. Eritrea and Italian Somaliland, by contrast, are isolated from the Mediterranean and Middle East areas and their remote location precludes attaching to them any importance in possible military operations in Northwest Africa. However, Italian Somaliland and Eritrea, as well as Libya, flank the lines of communication by sea or air between Southeast Asia and the countries of Western Europe. In addition, Somaliland and Eritrea would, in the hands of a military power capable of aggressive warfare, threaten the security of Ethiopia, the British and French Somalilands, the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, and Kenya (the latter a focal point in British plans for an African defense system subsequent to British withdrawal from Egypt).

British and French objectives in the North Africa-Near East area are not dissimilar, and, except for traditional tendencies to take whatever steps are necessary to maintain the status quo, the aims of these governments are not contrary to US aims. The UK and France now realize that their respective positions with regard to non-self-governing territories can be materially improved by mutual support. The UK seeks to offset loss of influence and control in Egypt and Palestine by strengthening its position in East Africa and in Libya. France seeks to avert any uprising in French North Africa, and also resists any attempts to weaken its colonial position relative to that of the UK; hence French opposition to any disposition of Libya favoring native independence, and French reluctance to support a plan providing for paramount British participation in administration of the Italian colonies. In any case the French chiefly fear any radical change in status of the North African colonies as a precedent damaging to France; hence the strong French support of Italy's claim to its pre-war colonies.

Italian aims are based on the need of the present administration to use all possible means of achieving political stability and economic rehabilitation within Italy. The contributions toward these objectives resulting from a return of the Italian colonies to Italy, either outright or as a UN trusteeship, are envisaged by the Italian Government to be (1) a rise in the national prestige, strengthening Italy's position in its foreign relations; (2) a rise in popular morale, which was brought to a low ebb by what Italians considered a harsh peace; and (3) an increase in opportunities, however limited, for strengthening the nation's economy. While a return of the colonies to Italy (or the designation of Italy as administering authority of a trust territory under the UN) would make a definite contribution to Italian morale and political stability, this consideration will probably not be decisive in maintaining the present anti-Communist administration in Italy. To bar Italy from participation would, however, nullify to some extent the gains resulting from US assistance by other means.

In contrast to Italian aims, the Arab League seeks to strengthen itself by securing independence for all Arab states now under foreign rule, including Libya. While the Arab League has made positive demands with regard to the disposition of the Italian colonies, it has to an even greater degree stressed its opposition to the reestablishment of Italian colonial control,

or the creation of a trusteeship administered by non-Arab powers. The Arab League probably estimates that the return of the colonies to Italian control deserves its most militant opposition because (1) it represents a probable compromise in view of possible inability of the Western Powers to secure Soviet approval to an agreement favoring Western colonial powers to the exclusion of the USSR; and of probable reluctance by the Western Powers to agree to a form of trusteeship in which Soviet participation could threaten their objectives; (2) the League believes that a reversion of the colonies to Italian control, among the possible alternatives, gives the least promise of a demarche leading to ultimate independence for the colonies.

Soviet objectives in the Near and Middle East and in the Mediterranean area have been and can again be advanced by using the Italian colonies issue (1) as a bargaining point to gain concessions from the Western Powers in other areas (e.g., the Trieste negotiations); (2) to extend Soviet influence into the Mediterranean and African areas; or (3) at minimum, to create conditions of instability both in the Moslem world and in Italy.

In the face of the need for resolving the conflict of interests among the Western Powers and the Arab states, the USSR can be counted upon to favor a course of action in which the potentials for instability are inherent. There are indications that the USSR has not yet decided which course this is to be. The failure of the USSR to join the UN Trusteeship Council is difficult to reconcile with the Soviet proposal that each Italian colony be placed under a ten-year joint trusteeship of one of the Big Four Powers and Italy, or with the Soviet agreement that, in case of deadlock in the Big Four, it will accept the recommendation of the UN General Assembly (where the USSR does not have veto power).

The USSR probably estimates that the US, the UK, and France will not agree to any disposition of the Italian colonies which would permit the USSR a free hand in one of the Italian colonies, for the intrusion in the Mediterranean or Red Sea area of a new major world power would constitute a major threat to the security of all three of these powers. The USSR hopes to use the Italian colonial issue to advance its cause as a champion of the native peoples in non-self-governing territories by placing upon the US, the UK, and France the onus for failure to give independence to the native population, or for failure to permit the realization of Arab League aspirations. Depending on the course of negotiations among the Big Four over the Italian colonies, the USSR also hopes to discredit the present Italian regime by attributing a Big Four failure to return the colonies to Italy to lack of international confidence in Italy's future under moderate leadership. Furthermore, the USSR must reserve a position favorable to Italian participation in the colonies in order to gain additional popular support for the return of Communists to the Italian Government. Thus the Communists would be quick to claim credit for any agreement under which Italy would be permitted a substantial degree of participation in the future of the colonies, while assuring for themselves control of the colonies if Italy becomes a Communist state. On the other hand, should an anti-Communist government survive in Italy, Italian participation in the control of the colonies would provide the Soviet Union with a much desired

opportunity to conduct a sub rosa campaign among non-self-governing peoples against the "bourgeois imperialists of the West".

In view of the above considerations, it is estimated that the USSR is now in an apparently strong position to achieve political gains, no matter what ultimate disposition is made of the Italian colonies. But the USSR can not presently profitably espouse either the Italian Communist or the Arab states to join an issue which is relatively a minor one when compared to the major issue: the future political complexion of the Italian state. Significant interdependent factors in this major issue are the ratification of the Italian Peace Treaty and the Marshall aid program for Europe, the latter of which has increased Soviet reluctance to ratify any of the peace treaties until Soviet control of satellite countries has been firmly established.

If it is assumed that the fate of Italy can be settled under conditions which will permit an eventual implementation of the present Italian Treaty and a continuation of active participation by the USSR in UN affairs, the USSR will seek to resolve the Italian colonial issue by compromise within the Council of Foreign Ministers, thus avoiding any prolonged debate in the UN General Assembly subsequent to the referral of the issue to that body by the Big Four.

If it cannot be assumed that the Italian Treaty will be ratified and that Soviet participation in UN activities will continue, the Italian African colonies in terms of their effect on US security will be relatively unimportant, and their disposition determined without reference to Soviet demands, but in the light of the then existing positions of the Western Powers.

Additional information concerning the Italian African colonies is contained in the following Enclosures hereto:

- Enclosure A - Present Status of the Italian African Colonies
- Enclosure B - Proposals for Disposition
- Enclosure C - Background in Brief
- Enclosure D - Selective Bibliography

ENCLOSURE APRESENT STATUS OF THE ITALIAN AFRICAN COLONIES

The Italian colonies of Libya, Eritrea, and Somaliland are at present administered by the British forces in occupation. A portion of Libya (the Fezzan) is administered by a de facto French military administration.

Provisions for their ultimate disposal are contained in the Treaty of Peace with Italy (dated 10 February 1947), in which Italy renounces all right and title to the colonies. The USSR, the UK, the US, and France are committed jointly to determine the final disposal of the colonies within one year from the coming into force of the Treaty (immediately upon the deposit of the instruments of ratification by the Big Four). Disposal is to be made "in the light of the wishes and welfare of the inhabitants and the interests of peace and security, taking into consideration the views of the interested governments". If the Four Powers are unable to agree within the specified time, "the matter shall be referred to the General Assembly of the United Nations for a recommendation, and the Four Powers agree to accept the recommendation and to take appropriate measures for giving effect to it".

To date the US, the UK, and France have ratified the Treaty, but have not deposited the ratifying instruments. On 31 July, the Constituent Assembly voted approval of ratification by the Italian Government, provided such action followed ratification by all the Big Four Powers. The USSR has not ratified the Treaty, and favors delaying the deposit of the instruments of ratification until all signatories are ready to deposit ratifications of the peace treaties for Rumania, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Finland--a procedure which might delay entry into force of the Italian treaty for an indefinite period.

ENCLOSURE BPROPOSALS FOR DISPOSITIONI. LIBYA.

Libya's importance in world strategy was clearly demonstrated in 1940-43, and in any future operations on a similar scale the major powers would realize the importance of the control of Libya and the need of denying it to hostile powers. Since Libya is of small importance economically, the strategic consideration is the main motive in present negotiations.

The powers must also keep in mind the effect the ultimate disposition of the colonies will have on public opinion in Italy, the Arab States, the colonies themselves, and in other non-self-governing areas, notably French North Africa. Although Italy profited strategically, it never really profited economically by its possession of Eritrea and Italian Somaliland; hence the loss of these territories would provoke but limited resentment in Italy. Libya, however, was of some actual importance to the Italians, and its loss would occasion intense general resentment. Should the USSR support Italian claims and they should be denied, the USSR could be counted on to exploit this resentment. Any gesture of support for the Arab States would help build up Arab good will. The aspirations of natives and European residents, particularly in Libya, must be taken into consideration in view of the present instability of the populations and the efforts of Communists to exploit discontent.

Though Italy, by signing the peace treaty on 10 February 1947, renounced its right to its colonies,* the Italian Government has requested a trusteeship over them, basing the case on the fact that Italy was subsequently accorded co-belligerent status by the Allies; that all three colonies were acquired before the rise of Fascism; that Libya before the war had become an integral part of Italian economy; that the colonies were developed through Italian effort; and that many Italians have migrated there.

The French support the Italian claim as the best solution from their own point of view. The French are keenly aware that any settlement in Libya will affect the situation in French North Africa, where there is at present a strong independence movement promoted in part, but not consistently, by Communist agents. If Libya were granted independence as the British at one time proposed, the agitation for a similar status in French North Africa would be dangerously aggravated. Even the provision in the US trusteeship proposal that allows for independence in ten years would give an encouragement to the natives in French North Africa.

Equally unpalatable to the French would be any of the various Arab proposals such as an Egyptian or an Arab League protectorate. Any such solution

* See Article 23 of Italian Peace Treaty.

would encourage the Arabs in French North Africa to end French control.

In general, the French would prefer control by a European colonial power --the Italians rather than the British because the French oppose any great extension of British power in Africa. The French intention is to get some advantage in the Fezzan area of Libya, in addition to the clear recognition that the boundaries of French West Africa and French Equatorial Africa with Libya (and of French Somaliland with Eritrea), are those preceding the January 1935 agreement between Laval and Mussolini.

British interest in Libya centers in Cyrenaica, which would make a substitute British base for those about to be abandoned in Egypt and Palestine. Britain's first proposal was for a division of the colony into its component parts, Cyrenaica and Tripolitania, each to have a separate trusteeship. Then the British supported the US proposal for a collective UN trusteeship over Libya. But in April 1946 the British abandoned this position and recommended immediate independence for a united Libya. The next month, however, the British agreed to a possible Italian trusteeship for Tripolitania, if the UK were granted a trusteeship over Cyrenaica. Recently it was reported that the UK general staff is demanding bases in Cyrenaica as vital to current British military plans for Africa. It is expected therefore that the British may again propose a divided Libya. The British have steadily opposed Italian trusteeship, in part because of their wartime pledges to the Senussi in Cyrenaica that the Italians would never again return to control.

The USSR would favor any plan that would mean an immediate or an eventual Soviet share in the control of Libya. With this in view, they have favored a divided Libya with an individual trusteeship for themselves over Tripolitania. They have also proposed a joint trusteeship with Italy over Tripolitania, while one of the other powers took a joint trusteeship with Italy over Cyrenaica. Later the USSR supported the French proposal for Italian trusteeship over Libya.

Egypt has presented territorial claims to parts of Libya and has proposed a plebiscite to ascertain whether the people of Libya would prefer to become independent, or to become an integral or an autonomous part of Egypt. Egypt also proposed that, if independence were impossible, Egypt or the Arab League be designated the administering authority, but full independence for Libya may be assumed as Egypt's first choice. The Arab League supports Egypt.

The US has consistently supported a proposal which is essentially the same for all three colonies, involving multiple trusteeships. In the case of Libya, the Administrator of the trusteeship would be appointed by and be responsible to the Trusteeship Council of the UN and would be advised by a committee consisting of members from the US, USSR, UK, France, and Italy, as well as a native and a European inhabitant. After ten years, Libya would become independent.

II. ERITREA.

Economically, Eritrea was a liability to Italy before the war, and there is no prospect that it will ever become any more valuable to a colonial power as a place of settlement, as much of it is virtually unfit for white men. Its position on the Red Sea and in proximity to the Near East, however, must be given careful consideration.

The USSR and US have put forward multiple trusteeship plans for Eritrea, that of the US being identical with its proposal for Libya with the exception that a territorial cession would be made giving Ethiopia access to the sea through the port of Assab. The original Soviet plan was also for a multiple trusteeship, but the administrator would be appointed by "one of the four powers", and his deputy by the Italian Government. The Soviets now back the French plan for an individual Italian trusteeship. The first of the Soviet plans would obviously put the Soviets in position to exercise some, and possibly considerable, control of the management of Eritrea; and the latter, if Soviet designs succeeded in Italy, would mean full control of the colony for the USSR. (The Soviets have shown an increased tendency to back Italian trusteeship for all the colonies.)

The British have generally supported the US trusteeship proposal and have been particularly strong in opposition to the French stand favoring Italian trusteeship. Specifically, however, the British support the Ethiopian claim to a "greater part" of Eritrea.

The Eritrean situation has been further complicated by the territorial claims of Egypt and Ethiopia. The Egyptians advance historical claims to Massawa and Eritrean territory contiguous to the Sudan, on the basis of which they believe it should be placed under the jurisdiction of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. More important are the claims of Ethiopia, based on past possession of the territory, ethnic similarities, and the righting of an old wrong done Ethiopia by the Italians. At the Paris Peace Conference, Ethiopia had the support of Canada, Yugoslavia, China, and India in its claims. It is recognized that the addition of this territory would strengthen Ethiopia as a member of the UN.

III. ITALIAN SOMALILAND.

Strategic and economic considerations in respect to Italian Somaliland do not differ materially from those affecting Eritrea.

In general, the US has consistently supported multiple trusteeship, though for Italian Somaliland there is no time limit or guarantee of eventual independence.

The British, while at first supporting the US plan, later brought forward their own proposal for a united Somaliland, including the Italian and British section and the Ethiopian Ogaden, all under a UK trusteeship.

Failing to gain support for this plan, the British apparently abandoned their plan for Greater Somalia. British plans in East Africa depend on the future status of Cyrenaica. If the disposition of Cyrenaica makes it possible for the British to retain their position in the Mediterranean, then the necessity for developing their interests in Italian East Africa will be mitigated. However, if the disposition of Cyrenaica does not make it possible to retain their Mediterranean line and a shift to East Africa becomes necessary, the British may seriously consider reviving the Greater Somalia scheme or assuming trusteeship over Italian Somaliland.

France and the USSR have favored return to Italian trusteeship.

Ethiopia objects to any trusteeship, including that under the British plan, and has advanced territorial claims to the colony.

ENCLOSURE CBACKGROUND IN BRIEFI. LIBYA.1. Physical Characteristics.

Libya, located on the south coast of the Mediterranean Sea between Egypt and Tunisia on the Mediterranean-Far East supply route, has an area of 390,000 square miles (six times that of Italy). Its value is in its strategic position and relatively good harbor facilities, since economically it has only very limited agricultural resources, with no known important mineral deposits. Libya is divided into three regions, Tripolitania, Cyrenaica and the Libyan desert, including Kufra. Since 80% of the total area is non-productive, possibilities for settlement are limited. Of the 78,000 square miles of productive area, 58,500 square miles is arid grazing land unsuitable for any other purpose; 17,000 square miles used for grazing and uncertain crops of barley in scattered patches; and 2,500 square miles suitable for static farming. Such farming is limited to the coastal strips of Tripoli-Misurata, and the plateau of Cyrenaica, which are separated by the 400-mile wide strip of desert south of the Gulf of Sirte. Owing to the scant rainfall and the geological structure of the country, water supplies are poor; surface water is almost non-existent, and there are no rivers. Hence development of irrigation is limited.

2. Population Characteristics.

The total population of Libya is 1,061,000, concentrated almost entirely (80%) in the productive coastal areas, and decreasing from north to south into the desert. The coastal strip includes the five largest towns, Tripoli, Homs, Misurata, Benghasi and Derna, and most of the foreign population. About one-third of the total population is urban and two-thirds rural. Only a very small proportion is nomadic. (Even in the southern district of Fezzan there are approximately 25,000 settled inhabitants as against 5,000 nomad.) The Jewish population has been established for generations. The Italian population reached its peak (65,000) in 1940.

Population (1946)

Area	Arab and Berber Moslems	Jews	Italians	Total
Tripolitania	690,000	26,000	38,000	754,000
Cyrenaica	254,000	5,000	---	259,000
Libyan Desert	48,000 (1936)	---	---	48,000
TOTAL	992,000	31,000	38,000	1,061,000

3. Recent Developments.

Prior to Italian acquisition in 1912, Libya, from the 16th century on, was under Ottoman administration.

In the late 19th Century scramble for African territory, Italy marked Libya for its own, as the only North African area not already preempted by France or Britain, and by extensive bilateral bargaining secured quit claims from all the major powers. Fearing that Turkish rule there might be rendered effective at long last, in consequence of the Turkish revolution of 1908, Italy made unprovoked war on Turkey in 1911 in order to seize the colony before it was too late. The outbreak of the Balkan Wars (1912) compelled Turkey to sue for peace, ceding the territory, but it took the Italians twenty years to complete the subjugation of the natives. Until 1919 Italian control was limited to a few coastal areas. The resistance of the Senussi, whose capital was at Kufra, was not subdued until 1933.

From 1928 onwards the Italian government made particular efforts to attract Italian settlers to Libya, with indifferent success, although small Italian communities were by this means established in the more fertile coastal areas. Under Italian administration the territory was divided into two colonies, Tripolitania and Cyrenaica, until 1934, when a reunited Libya was established as a province of metropolitan Italy.

Italian expansion before and under the Fascists was based on a concern for the balance of power in the Mediterranean. It was also hoped that Libya might help meet the need for raw materials and serve as an outlet for surplus population. Libya failed to prove a source for raw materials and only by government financial and moral support gave limited relief in the late 1930's to Italy's population pressure. Libya can absorb settlers on a limited scale, but the annual Italian increase of population far exceeds Libya's total capacity.

The nationalist spirit in Libya, evidenced by the continued Arab resistance to Italian expansion efforts, appeared during World War II in several forms. Libyans in Cairo formed committees to work for the liberation and independence of their country. Many others joined the Libyan Arab Force, raised to fight with the British Army in the Western Desert.

After the defeat of the Axis forces in Libya, a British Military Administration was set up in Cyrenaica and Tripolitania; the French continued to administer the Fezzan in the south of Libya, an area which they had earlier occupied. Libyan complaints have been loud against British occupation forces, centering at present around famine conditions which have resulted from crop failures. The British are accused of discrimination in treating Cyrenaica as almost an ally, while Tripolitania is still regarded as an ex-enemy country. Both areas have been ruled by proclamation, but the Italian penal code, as modified by the removal of fascist legislation, has been maintained in Tripolitania. The British defend their position on the ground that they are governing on a "care and maintenance" basis until final disposition of Libya has been determined.

Arab feeling against the Italians personally is not great, but dislike of them as an administering force is very extensive, especially in Cyrenaica. Although the entire Italian population of Cyrenaica was withdrawn on the evacuation of enemy forces, 38,000 stayed on in Tripolitania during and after the war, some in administrative positions, most of them engaged in agriculture.

Arab-Jewish relations have been peaceful since the arrival of some Jews early in the Christian era, and of others over the past several hundred years from other parts of the Mediterranean. Anti-Jewish riots took place in Tripolitania in 1945, but consisted largely of looting by unemployed and criminal elements against Jews as an economic rather than a racial group.

Politically, conditions differ in Cyrenaica and Tripolitania. The strongest political force in Cyrenaica, and to a certain extent in Tripolitania, is that of the Senussi sect headed by El Sayyid Idris, grandson of its founder. But the ability of this group to provide some kind of governmental administration in the area appears to be questionable, for the type of administration control which the Senussi might be able to exercise would hardly amount to full governmental functions in the Western sense. Sayyid Idris, who is himself heavily subsidized by the British, apparently realizes that the material resources at his disposal would not suffice for the country's needs as to an effective administration. Unless the country were permitted to relapse into some kind of primitive government incompatible with modern requirements, even a Senussi administration for Cyrenaica alone would need some foreign support and, if reluctant to accept it at once, would be obliged after a while to depend on it.

There is no other native stabilizing force in Libya aside from the Senussi movement. In Tripolitania, the Nationalist Party, headed by Salem Muntasser, is the oldest, but is of little importance now. Its aim is the independence of Libya under the Emirship of El Sayyid Idris. The United Front Party claims to represent some 400,000 Arabs (about 60%), with aims similar to those of the Nationalists. The Kutla Party separated from the Nationalists in protest at the formation of the United Front Party. While its main objectives parallel closely those of the other two parties, there are these exceptions: (1) Advocation of closer ties with the Arab League; and (2) Rejection of the plan for a Senussi Emirate. The Egypt-Tripolitanian Union, reported to be backed by Azzam Pasha, Secretary-General of the Arab League, has but little support.

A real problem in any plan to place the function of government in the hands of indigenous elements is the almost complete lack of a professional class (although to no greater extent than in Iraq and Trans-Jordan in 1919). The Nationalists distinguish between administrative officials, which they feel they can supply, and professional and technical men, who can be hired from abroad until better educational facilities have trained indigenous students to fill these posts.

It must be kept in mind that there are no indications of desire among the Lityan population to have a non-Moslem power take over the administration of the country.

II. ERITREA.

1. Physical Characteristics.

Eritrea's area of 45,000 square miles falls into four natural divisions: the western plains and hill country; the central and northern mountain chain including an extension of the Ethiopian plateau; the southern highlands, and the Red Sea coastal plain or desert. The country has 670 miles of coastline along the Red Sea, one of the world's most important traffic routes. Eritrea's port of Massawa is the best harbor between Port Sudan and Mombassa. Only the central plateau around Asmara is fit for European habitation, the climate elsewhere being featured almost all of the year by intense heat and excessive humidity.

Because arable land is limited and rainfall uncertain, Eritrea can count on very little agricultural production. Thus populations of the western, central, and Red Sea areas are nomadic or semi-nomadic; and the people of the southern highlands, who can raise food, must presently import part of their requirement. No oil or workable deposits of iron, lead, manganese or copper have been found, and reports of pitchblende deposits are as yet unconfirmed. Gold, salt, sulphur, feldspar, and china clay are produced but not in significant quantities. There is little likelihood that the country will ever be industrialized or that the prevailing unfavorable pre-war trade balance will change.

2. Population Characteristics.

The native population of 760,000 is heterogeneous. Based on religion the division is about equal between Moslems and Christian Copts. In addition there are 40,000 Italians who live mainly in Asmara. The Christian Copts are found largely on the south central plateau, which once formed the northern half of the Ethiopian province of Tigrai, and are related ethnically, culturally and religiously to the inhabitants of that province. To the north and west of this plateau area live Moslems (Beni Amer tribe), related to the Sudanese across the frontier. The rest of the Moslems live south of Massawa along the Red Sea coast, and are, for the most part, Danakils, related to the Somali tribes of Ethiopia and French Somaliland.

3. Recent Developments.

After the 16th Century Eritrea was first under the shadowy suzerainty of the Ottoman Empire and then under that of Egypt, except for the southern plateau, which was part of Ethiopia. Starting with the annexation of Assam in 1882, after its purchase from a native Sultan by an Italian steamship company,

Italy, by a series of treaties with native potentates and other European powers, extended her rule to the port of Massawa and then occupied the area between these two ports. In 1890 the Red Sea colonies were united by royal decree into one province, under military administration, named the colony of Eritrea.

In 1896, civil administration was introduced into Eritrea and the colony made steady but rather slow progress. Only 3,000 to 4,000 settlers had arrived by 1935. After the conquest of Ethiopia in 1936, Eritrea was made an integral part of the Italian East African Empire, and settlement increased. The Italians claimed 75,000 "settlers" by 1941.

British Imperial troops occupied Eritrea in 1941 and large numbers of Italians were evacuated and repatriated. The Allies repaired the harbor of Massawa, wrecked by the Italians, and used it for supplying forces in Egypt. In addition, 60 airfields were developed, most of which are now in poor condition, but could again be made serviceable. The colony has been under British Military Administration since the occupation.

Native feeling is anti-European. Most of the Copts and Moslems dislike the Italians because of the Fascist doctrine of racial superiority, and the conquest of Ethiopia. The majority of Moslems oppose rule by Coptic Christians and union with Ethiopia. The Eritrean Moslem League, containing some collaborationists who naturally favor independence, has been organized to place the Moslems in a bargaining position when the final disposition of the colony is made. The Copts are divided into two main groups. Probably the most active of these groups is the Unionists, young Asmara intelligentsia who want outright incorporation into Ethiopia, and are spreading propaganda to this effect, backed financially by the Ethiopian Government. The Federalists (or Separatists), a very recent bloc separated from the Unionists, represent a more liberal and educated minority of Copts, plus a few Moslems, who desire the incorporation of the colony into the Ethiopian Empire as a federated state.

III. ITALIAN SOMALILAND.

1. Physical Characteristics.

Italian Somaliland extends from the Gulf of Aden southwest along the shore of the Indian Ocean about 1400 miles to the frontier of Kenya. The territory runs inland from the coast to a depth of 250-300 miles, having a boundary, for the most part entirely artificial, with British Somaliland, Ethiopia, and Kenya Colony. Almost all of this boundary is on the edges of the Ethiopian plateau. Except on the plateau, the country has torrid temperatures and little rainfall.

The territory is exceptionally deficient in natural resources of any value to a colonizing nation. Most of the country is hot, flat desert covered

with thorn scrub. Agriculture is confined to the two river valleys of the Juba and Web Shibeli. Nomadic tribes raise some cattle, but even this industry is limited by the prevalence of the tsetse fly in the south. Mineral deposits, with the exception of salt, have been found too insignificant to merit exploitation. There is one natural harbor in Kismayu and an artificial harbor, constructed by the Italians, at Mogadishu, the capital.

The inhabitants have always carried on a trade in dressed skins, cattle, frankincense, myrrh, and gum arabic. In addition, the Italians, after 1922, tried energetically to develop a profitable agriculture, cotton being the principal crop cultivated. This was done, however, only through government subsidies, and the colony was always operated by the Italians at a considerable loss.

2. Population Characteristics.

The majority of the population (1,150,000) are Somalis, a branch of the Hamitic race. The same race inhabits the whole Somaliland area as well as southeast Ethiopia. There are about 5,000 Italians (almost all of them concentrated at Mogadishu) and a scattering of Indians and Arabs.

The Somalis are Moslems, are divided into complex nomadic tribes, and are constantly engaged in bloody feuds over the water rights on which their nomadic existence depends. Little unity exists among them, nor is any likely to be achieved by them in the future.

3. Recent Developments.

In 1889, southern Somalia was leased to Italy by the Sultan of Zanzibar, and northern Somalia was put under Italian protection by treaties with native sultans. In 1924, Jubaland (the area between the present border of Kenya and the Juba River) was ceded to Italy by the British in settlement of Italian claims in Africa arising from the Treaty of London. Italian Somaliland was incorporated into Italian East Africa in 1936 and administered as one of the six provinces of that Empire.

The area was occupied by British Imperial forces in 1941 and has since been under British Military Administration. Italians have been permitted to retain most of their privileges. Farming and industrial production has been stimulated by British loans.

Native feeling is generally anti-European and specifically anti-Italian, a condition brought about largely by the Italian agricultural policy which involved an indefinite period of what amounted to slavery for Somali women and children on Italian farms. Some reports indicate, however, that this animosity is gradually dying down.

In any case, the natives do not have and are incapable of forming any organization which would be capable of reasonable self-government or of resistance to colonization.

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Italy and Home Islands

Former Italian Colonies in Africa

